

REMARKS

Applicant expresses appreciation to the Examiner for consideration of the subject patent application. This amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed June 17, 2004. Claims 1-6, 9, 10, 12, 15-18, and 20 were objected to.

Claims 1-6, 9, 10, 12, 15-18 and 20 were previously presented. Claims 1-6, 9, 10, 12, 15-18 and 20 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 21-32 have been added.

Claims 21 and 28 have been added as independent claims. Claims 22-27 and 29-32 have been added as dependent claims. No new matter has been added in the new claims. Following is a list of the new independent claims with citations to the original source of the claim from the specification:

21. A system for remote management of one or more printing devices in a local area network having an internet connection, comprising:
 - a first computer in communication with the local area network, the first computer having a connection with a printing device; (See Page 5, Lines 4-5, 22-25)
 - a remote diagnostic center computer having a separate internet connection and a remote diagnostic center website with a printing device management application located at the remote diagnostic center website, wherein the remote diagnostic center computer does not have direct access to the local area network; (See Page 7, Lines 4-6; Page 2, Lines 13-16; Page 10, Lines 20-21, FIG. 3)
 - the printing device management application configured to be downloaded to the first computer via the internet connection of the local area network, wherein the printer information management application comprises a user interface configured to be displayed on the first computer; and (See Page 8, Lines 9-12 and 15-16)
 - the user interface further comprising a share feature configured to allow a user within the local area network to enable one or more third-parties to view otherwise private information regarding the printing device in order to enable a maintenance technician to determine a condition of the printing device before making a service call. (See Page 10, Lines 18-21; Page 2, Lines 17-18)

28. A method for remote management of one or more printing devices, comprising the step of:

storing a printing device management application on a remote diagnostic center computer having an internet connection; (See Page 7, Lines 4-8)

downloading the printing device management application from the remote diagnostic center computer to a computer located within a local area network, wherein the computer is connected to a printing device; (See Page 8, Lines 6-12)

obtaining diagnostic data from the printing device at the computer using the printing device management application; (See Page 10, Lines 3-17)

sending access authorization from the computer located within the local area network to one or more maintenance organizations, wherein the maintenance organization does not have access to the local area network without said access authorization; and (See Page 10, Lines 18-21)

enabling access by the one or more maintenance organizations to the printing device within the local area network to enable a maintenance technician to determine a condition of the printing device before making a service call. (See Page 10, Lines 21-24; Page 5, Lines 1-6)

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-6, 9, 10, 12, and 15 stand rejected under § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. The rejected claims 1-6, 9, 10, 12, and 15 have been cancelled. Newly added claims 21-32 do not contain subject matter which was not described in the specification and Applicant believes that the new claims more clearly define the invention.

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under § 112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1-6 have been cancelled.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-5, 9, 10, 12, 15-18, and 20 (including independent claims 1 and 9) were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hanson (US 6,148,346).

In order to most succinctly explain why the claims presented herein are allowable, Applicant will direct the following remarks primarily to the newly presented independent claims 21 and 28, which were drafted to replace independent claims 1 and 9 respectively. It is understood that once an independent claim is allowable, all claims depending therefrom are allowable.

The Hanson reference cited by the Examiner discloses the use of a dynamic device driver which enables a system administrator located within a local area network to use a host computer within the computer network to change the security permissions for a peripheral device such as a printer. For example, Hanson states: "A system administrator using a printer access maintenance menu [to] limit or expand printer access by changing accessible user address or [to] add or remove users from an existing access list." (See Col. 6 Lines 25-30). The driver can also allow the system administrator to locally execute a diagnostic program and receive information pertaining to the printer's status. (See Col. 7 Lines 45-50, Col. 8 Lines 48-55). The dynamic device drivers disclosed in Hanson are useful only for a system administrator or other person to control peripherals within the local network.

Hanson does not disclose a system that can allow a maintenance organization which is not affiliated with a business enterprise or the enterprise's equipment to perform remote diagnostics or get diagnostic data from the enterprise's equipment, including enterprise printing devices. (See spec. Page 2, Lines 14-16). Further, Hanson does not disclose a system which can enable a maintenance organization located outside the business enterprise's firewall and/or local area network to perform remote diagnostics or get diagnostic data from enterprise equipment access to the printing devices located within the local area network. (See spec. Page 2, Lines 1-10).

The present invention discloses a system and method for remote management of printing devices. The remote management can be enabled through a printer information management system comprising computer code stored on a remote diagnostic center server. The remote

diagnostic center server is located outside the business enterprise's local area network and does not have access to the local area network. The printer information management system software can be downloaded to a computer inside the business enterprise as directed by an internal user. A user interface can enable a person within the business enterprise to obtain information about printers connected to the business enterprise's local area network and also about printers connected directly to computers which are connected to the local area network within the business enterprise. The person can employ the user interface to obtain printer information and then can share that information with a maintenance organization outside the business enterprise. The maintenance organization can use the information to fix printer problems more quickly and accurately.

Specifically, claim 21 of the present invention, recites:

“the printer information management application configured to be downloaded via the internet to the first computer, wherein the printer information management application comprises a user interface configured to be displayed on the first computer....” The printer information management system can “allow the user to enable one or more third-parties to view otherwise private information regarding the printing device in order to enable a maintenance technician to determine the condition of the printing device before making a service call.”

The Hanson reference fails to disclose a share feature configured to allow the user to enable one or more third-parties to view otherwise private information regarding a printing device in order to enable a maintenance technician to gain an understanding of the state of the printing device before making a service call. The system administrator in Hanson is not an external third party. The information is not otherwise private to the system administrator, who typically has rights to all parts of the system, whether or not a computer user grants access to his or her computer. Indeed, it is typically the system administrator which grants access rights to the user, not the other way around.

The Hanson reference further fails to disclose a remote diagnostic center located external to the business enterprise. There is no need for Hanson to use an external diagnostic center, as

Hanson is configured to enable the system administrator within the business enterprise to control the printers located within the business enterprise.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that new independent claim 21 is allowable, and urges the Examiner to withdraw the rejection. The dependent claims, 22-27, being narrower in scope, are allowable for at least the reasons for which the independent claim is allowable.

Regarding claim 28, the Office Action states that Hanson teaches a method including the step of receiving authorization that allows a person to view diagnostic information and to change printer settings. (Hanson Col. 6, Lines 25-30). As previously discussed, Hanson discloses software having a printer access maintenance menu wherein a system administrator using the printer access maintenance menu can limit or expand printer access by changing an accessible user address or can add or remove users from an existing access list.

In contrast, the present invention discloses a system wherein printer information management software can be used to enable a third party, such as a maintenance organization, to have access to a printing device located in a local area network. Unlike Hanson, where the network administrator has access to his or her network, the third party in the present case does not have access to the local area network without authorization from a computer located within the local area network which is operating the printer information management software. Only when authorization has been granted with the printer information management software of the claimed invention can the third-party have access to the printers within the local area network, including both network connected and locally connected printers. This is substantially different than the process described in Hanson.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that new independent claim 28 is allowable, and urges the Examiner to withdraw the rejection. The dependent claims, 29-32, being narrower in scope, are allowable for at least the reasons for which the independent claim is allowable.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Hanson in view of Wood et al. (US 6,453,127). Claim 6 has been canceled. However, the subject matter of claim 6 has been included in independent claims 21 and 28.

The Office Action states that it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to have modified Hanson's system by the teaching of Wood et al. to arrive at the system in the present invention. Specifically, the office action stated that combining Hanson and Wood can teach that a person within a business enterprise can enable a service person outside the business enterprise to gain access of the diagnostic data of a printer from anywhere in the world as long as the service person has a computer connected to the internet. The combination of teachings in Hanson and Wood et al., however, do not achieve the invention in the present invention.

As previously discussed, Hanson does not teach or disclose enabling a third-party, such as a service person, which is located outside the local area network, to have access to the printing devices. In fact, Hanson discloses a driver which enables a system administrator to have access to the printers throughout the local area network. There would be no benefit for the system administrator in Hanson to have the ability to access the printer information using Java applets saved on a web server. The driver disclosed in Hanson already enables the system administrator to have the necessary access. No access to someone outside the system administrator's system is disclosed. Therefore, it would not have been obvious to combine the teachings of Hanson and Wood et al. Combining the cited references would provide a system in which the system administrator would have an additional method for accessing the printers within his or her system. Whereas the present invention provides a system in which a third-party located outside the local area network can be authorized to access printing devices within a local area network. The combination of the cited references would not arrive at the present invention.

Therefore, the Hanson and Wood references, when combined, do not teach or suggest all of the elements of the cancelled claim 6. Applicant respectfully submits that the teachings of claim 6 which have been incorporated in new independent claims 21 and 28 are allowable, and urges the Examiner to withdraw the rejection.

CONCLUSION

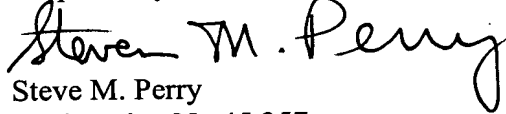
In light of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that pending claims 21-32 are now in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicant requests that the rejections and objections be withdrawn, and that the claims be allowed and passed to issue. If any impediment to the allowance of these claims remains after entry of this Amendment, the Examiner is strongly encouraged to call Steve M. Perry at (801) 566-6633 so that such matters may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Twelve claims were added (claims 21-32), including two independent claims (claims 21 and 28), while fourteen claims were canceled (claims 1-6, 9, 10, 12, 15-18 and 20), including three independent claims (claims 1, 9, and 16). Therefore, no additional fee is due.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee or to credit any overpayment in connection with this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

DATED this 17th day of September, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,



Steve M. Perry
Registration No.45,357

THORPE NORTH & WESTERN, LLP
Customer No. 20,551
P.O. Box 1219
Sandy, Utah 84091-1219
Telephone: (801) 566-6633